



Minutes of the WestWorld Subcommittee  
February 17, 2005, 9:30 a.m.

Members Present: Subcommittee Chair: Wayne Ecton  
Council member Betty Drake  
Council member Ron McCullagh

City Staff Present: Roger Klingler, Assistant City Manager  
Brad Gessner, WestWorld General Manager  
Gloria Storms Ruiz, WestWorld Administrative Secretary  
Natalie Lewis, Executive Assistant to the City Manager  
Kathy Carlisle O'Connor, Economic Vitality  
Dan Worth, City Engineer

Call to order at 9:30 a.m., with roll call by Chairman Ecton.

Approve minutes from December 16, 2004 meeting; motion to approve was made by Betty Drake and seconded by Ron McCullagh, with no objections.

Brad Gessner asked that the audience introduce themselves to the Subcommittee: Bill Miles, Bureau of Reclamation; Kathy Carlisle O'Connor, Economic Vitality; Janice Wight, Arabian Horse Association; Bronwyn Harkin, dmg World Media; Jason Rose, Casey McDonald & Craig Jackson from Barrett Jackson; Jan Bruner, Sun Country Circuit; Barbara Dietz, Scottsdale Classic and Grant Boice, AZ National Livestock Show.

**1. WestWorld Event Update – February through April - Brad Gessner**

Mr. Gessner began with mentioning that the Scottsdale Arabian Horse Show would begin its run tomorrow, Friday the 18<sup>th</sup> of February. This is the largest equestrian event at WestWorld. This year, they have over 2200 horses participating in the event, which makes it their largest event to date.

Sun Country Circuit horse show started their January event with record entries, but because of the heavy rain before and during their event, many participants opted to leave early or not come at all. This definitely affected the economic impact of this event. He mentioned that the Fiesta Cluster Dog Show is taking place the first week of March. This event draws a lot of participants from out of town and WestWorld is looking at a long-term contract with them.

Sun Festival Southwest, which used to be called Solfest Southwest, is a City sponsored event with a focus on environmentalism that begins in April and runs in conjunction with the McDowell Mountain Music Festival. Both of these events are becoming very successful even though they are only in their second year at WestWorld.

Region VII Arabian Horse Show is the last large equestrian event of our season scheduled for April 24 – May 1, 2005. This is a very successful show that has a long history at WestWorld.

## **2. Master Plan Projects Review – Brad Gessner & Roger Klingler**

- a. Restroom Complex – *Complete* - This restroom/shower facility, which was completed just prior to the Barrett Jackson event, was used heavily by both Barrett Jackson and Home Show attendees.
- b. Cover Arenas 3 & 4 – Dan Worth, City of Scottsdale, stated the funding for covering these arenas is included in the 05/06 budget, with a target completion date in 2007.

Brad Gessner reiterated that covering the arenas was of the utmost importance to the equestrian community. The impact of inclement weather for the horse show producers, riders and horses renders the outdoor arenas unusable for long periods of time.

Grant Boice, AZ National Livestock Association, stated that although it did not rain during his show, it had rained heavily two days prior to his event opening and this impacted his event negatively. He had 2200 entries last year and only 800 this year due to weather. Grant said that even though the WestWorld crew did their best to prepare the arenas after the rains, it was just not possible to accomplish. Using the Wendell Arena was not an option this year because the drainage is so poor.

Wayne Ecton asked if there was a problem with covering the arenas earlier than planned. Brad Gessner said that finding the money in the budget was the issue. Mr. Gessner suggested that the City buy or rent tenting to temporarily cover both arenas, until construction can begin on the proposed Master Plan recommendations. Mr. Gessner pointed out that the Arabian Association currently rents tents to cover Arenas 3 and 5A.

Betty Drake asked Mr. Gessner to bring budget estimates to the next meeting for covering the arenas temporarily. Wayne Ecton agreed with this.

- c. Relocate Arenas 6, 7, & 8 – Brad Gessner stated the bid is on the street, with the bid opening scheduled for March 8, 2005, and scheduled to go before the City Council by the end of March. They plan to break ground right after Region VII, with construction completed in August.

Since the Arabian Horse Show is losing a great deal of space because of the arena move, Janice Wight requested WestWorld address moving some electrical pedestals to make more space for their temporary barns. Brad Gessner stated that WestWorld is working with AHAA to move these pedestals to allow for more efficient use of space for temporary barns.

Wayne Ecton asked if reconfiguring and moving these three arenas would suit all events. Mr. Gessner answered he felt it would.

Barbara Dietz stated it is imperative to have the arena move complete before the Scottsdale Classic Quarter Horse Show in October.

Wayne Ecton inquired how many bids were received on this project last summer. Mr. Gessner stated that nine bids came in during the last RFP process; however, the lowest bid came in at close to double the budget and they had to readdress the design and re-bid to lessen costs. Wayne Ecton suggested that since there is a time constraint, the RFP consider the past timeliness of the bidders. Dan Worth stated the current RFP had a 120-day completion date, with penalties for non-compliance.

- d. 115,000 sq. ft. Multi Purpose Building – Dan Worth stated that the design process is continuing. The City was able to select the Construction Manager at the beginning of the process (cm@risk), which means the project is more assured to coming in on budget because the Construction Manager is involved with cost estimating. They provide design recommendations to help keep construction costs down.

The design team is looking at some changes to the plans in order to come in at their budgeted amount. Some of the changes may include: a flat or sloping roof, adding columns to support the new roof design, and changing the exterior finishes. They intend to keep architectural integrity, possibly using some of the design of the Trailhead facility at WestWorld. The other possibility is to reduce the size from 115,000 sq. ft. to 100,000 sq. ft.

Bronwyn Harkin of dmj World Media said that it is crucial to her consumer shows to have at least 115,000 net sq. ft. of exhibit space. She indicated they had approximately 120,000 sq. ft. of exhibits at the Home & Garden Show that was just held.

Betty Drake expressed her concerns about the Multi Purpose Hall. She feels WestWorld is losing its focus as an equestrian venue and bringing in too many non-equestrian events. She also stated that she didn't think the equestrian groups would use the Multi Purpose Hall if built.

Mark Munhall, of Greyhound Exposition Services and Trade Show Electric Services, urged the Subcommittee to go forward with the Multi Use Facility. He also stated that the City is not using WestWorld to its full benefit, thereby losing money. He said WestWorld's location alone is a huge benefit for show organizers and that the City should capitalize on this. He also felt the size of the building should not be smaller than originally planned and suggested it may need to be larger than the proposed 115,000 square feet.

Wayne Ecton asked what the cost per sq. ft. is for the hall and Dan Worth said it was approximately \$200 per sq. ft. Wayne Ecton also asked if it was designed to be expandable in the future and he was assured by Brad Gessner, that the entire west end can open to enable a User to add a tent to it. The west end was also designed not to be a load-bearing wall so that it could be removed in the future to expand the building.

Ron McCullagh asked if building the Hall was a good idea if the City was not able to acquire the state land just north of WestWorld. Brad Gessner said that most of WestWorld's events could still use the facility without the state land, with the exception of Barrett Jackson. This event could not go forward without the use of the state land.

A discussion ensued as to whether the design of the Multi Purpose Building should be reviewed. The Committee stated that since the Master Plan was done two years ago, possibly the need for the building should be reviewed.

The possibility of the City building a convention center/exhibit hall in another part of the city, and leaving WestWorld an equestrian center was suggested. There was an open discussion on this idea, with no resolution.

- e. State Land Acquisition – Roger Klingler said Jan Dolan has been speaking with Mark Winkelman, State Land Commissioner. The state is doing an appraisal of this land at this time, and more information will be available after March 2005.

The City is asking the state if they would consider a long-term lease rather than auction the parcels. The state does not, at this time, know what the cost of a lease would be, or even if they would consider this.

Another option is, instead of the state bundling four parcels together in one sale, separate them. There is a private party that is interested in two of the parcels that WestWorld is not interested in. The private party could buy two of them and WestWorld could buy the other two parcels. The City will continue investigating options and report to the Subcommittee.

Janice Wight, AHAA, stated that it is imperative for the City to purchase this land. Ron McCullagh asked her if they could continue holding their show at WestWorld if the City did not acquire the land. Janice stated that they would want to stay at WestWorld but they would not be able to grow, she said that they would probably become more selective to maintain the size of their show.

- f. Marquee Signage – Brad Gessner stated that Daktronics did a 'test run' of an L.E.D. display sign at WestWorld during the last Design Team meeting. It was determined that the size of the sign allowable under the City's Sign Ordinance would be large enough to have messages seen from the SR 101. Mr. Gessner indicated they have received several inquiries from citizens requesting we install an informational sign so they can see what events are taking place at WestWorld. He said that over 200,000 vehicles a day go by WestWorld each day, and it would be great if we could take advantage of this to promote our horse shows and other special events. The design team is in the process of developing an acceptable design, which will come back to the Subcommittee for their review.
- g. Show Office – A new show office next to Arenas 6, 7, & 8 is one of the improvements that was recommended in the Master Plan. The office is being designed and we hope to have it built this year.

- h. Equidome Improvements – Brad Gessner said that the Equidome improvements are planned for 2008/2009 and the first phase of implementing the Master Plan would include:

- Polo Field hardscape
- Realign main road
- Better drainage at 94<sup>th</sup> St. & WestWorld Road
- Address arena damage due to rain
- Walkway reconditioning with granite
- Additional power to arenas
- Drainage surrounding Equidome

*Short- term* improvements to Arenas 3 & 4:

- It was suggested the City could buy two tents that would cover both arenas that would keep Users more comfortable during the winter storm events and provide some shading during summer months. These tents would come down, when the permanent covers were built, and could possibly be sold. The tent re-sale value is very good.

*Long- term* improvements:

- The Equidome improvements would consist of enlarging the facility by 60,000 sq. ft., with more seating, permanent concession stands, a new show office, a higher ceiling, more exhibit space, heating and cooling, and better flooring.

Wayne Ecton said he felt these improvements were necessary and WestWorld had pushed for several years to get these projects implemented. He asked how feasible it was to get funding for these projects.

Betty Drake said she prefers to accelerate the Equidome improvements rather than build the Exhibit Hall. She also indicated she would like to see improvements made to the Wendell Arena. She is against hardscaping the Polo Field for Barrett Jackson because she feels they are planning to leave Scottsdale and hold their show in Glendale.

Bronwyn Harkin, dmg world media, said that if the City does not build the Exhibit Hall, they would probably leave WestWorld. She said they feel WestWorld is an excellent location to host the many consumer shows dmg World Media produces, but that they would need a permanent building and not just tents.

Betty Drake said she believes WestWorld should be for equestrian use only.

Brad Gessner assured the Committee that equestrian events always have priority over non-equestrian events, but that the Business Plan adopted by the City in 1998 specifically states that WestWorld will host both equestrian and special events.

Craig Jackson suggested the City sell bonds to fund the Master Plan and build it all at once.

Wayne Ecton suggested that Brad Gessner and Roger Klingler go to Craig Clifford, General Manager of Financial Services with the City, to find options for financing.

Ron McCullagh asked Craig Jackson that if the Exhibit Hall and Equidome were built and improved would he keep his event here? Craig Jackson said that the traffic and parking problems would have to be solved first. Mr. Jackson indicated if all of these steps were taken, he would keep his event here at WestWorld.

Ron McCullagh raised the question of how will these improvements affect the pricing structure.

Bronwyn Harkin and Craig Jackson stated that holding their shows in the tent cost them thousands of dollars already. (The Home Show paid \$28,000 for air conditioning for three days and Barrett Jackson paid seven figures to build their infrastructure, the electricity alone cost \$200,000. Mr. Gessner indicated the pricing of these new venues had not been determined.

### **3. Recap and update of the Barrett Jackson Car Auction – Roger Klingler**

Roger Klingler briefly covered some of the challenges that the event encountered due to the rainy weather, and what the City did to address them. Much discussion between the Subcommittee, Craig Jackson and Roger Klingler ensued.

### **4. Current and future facility rental rates – Brad Gessner**

Brad Gessner said the current WestWorld facility rates are very competitive with comparable facilities for equestrian events, and a little more expensive for consumer shows and other special events. He would recommend the City not raise WestWorld rates for at least one year. He also mentioned that with so much construction scheduled for the next year, that shows would likely be inconvenienced to a degree, and that we should wait until after the major projects are complete before raising rates.

WestWorld is close to breaking even operationally, largely because of the increased event programming and new revenue programs.

Roger Klingler stated that rates always have to be approved by the City Council prior to implementing them. At that time, there could be more input.

Betty Drake reiterated she felt that WestWorld should remain an equestrian facility.

Roger Klingler stated that the reality is that Gila River, Empty Acres, Queen Creek, and Glendale want to take our events away from us. We need to address the issue of improvements to keep this from happening.

**5. Tent Rental Agreement Status – Roger Klingler**

Roger Klinger stated the City needs Craig Jackson's signature on the Tent Rental Agreement. The City could look at the original agreement with modifications. It would be in effect until July 2006, with the possibility of extending it if both parties agree.

Craig Jackson stated that improvements at WestWorld (State Land purchase, drainage issues, Polo Field hardscape and road straightening) must be addressed before he will commit to leaving his tent at WestWorld after his 2005 event.

**6. Bureau of Reclamation – Bill Miles**

Bill Miles wanted to clarify the Bureau of Reclamation's position on consumer events and other public special events being held at WestWorld. The Bureau approves of WestWorld hosting these events. He indicated that consumer shows and other special events are still considered recreational activities as long as they are open to the public (versus trade shows that may be closed to the public.) Even private shows that are closed to the public are permissible provided they don't displace a public special event.

Mr. Miles also stated that exclusive use of WestWorld is not permissible by the BOR.

**7. Other Items – None**

**8. Next meeting date:** Thursday, April 28, 2005, 8:00 a.m., Monterra at WestWorld.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:35 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Gloria Storms Ruiz